

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the Claims 5-6 as follows. Insertions are shown underlined while deletions are ~~struck through~~. Please add Claims 6-16.

1 (original): A low-density neutral paper characterized by containing as a filler a precipitated calcium carbonate-silica composite wherein a surface of precipitated calcium carbonate particles is covered with silica and a ratio of precipitated calcium carbonate to silica (precipitated calcium carbonate/silica) is 30/70 to 70/30 in solid content by weight.

2 (original): A low-density neutral paper according to Claim 1, characterized in that the low-density neutral paper is any of a printing paper, neutral newsprinting paper, or electrophotographic transfer paper.

3 (original): A low-density neutral paper according to Claim 1, characterized in that the low-density neutral paper is a printing paper or electrophotographic transfer paper containing the precipitated calcium carbonate-silica composite at a filler content in paper of 1 to 25 solid content percent by weight.

4 (original): A low-density neutral paper according to Claim 1, characterized in that the low-density neutral paper is a neutral newsprinting paper containing the precipitated calcium carbonate-silica composite at a filler content in paper of 0.1 to 25 solid content percent by weight.

5 (currently amended): A low-density neutral paper according to ~~any one of Claim 1 to 4~~Claim 1, characterized in that the average particle size of the precipitated calcium carbonate-silica composite is 30 μ m or less.

6 (currently amended): A low-density neutral paper according to ~~any one of Claims 1 to 5~~Claim 1, characterized in that the precipitated calcium carbonate particles used to produce the precipitated calcium carbonate-silica composite are constituted by rosette-calcite precipitated calcium carbonate where spindle-shaped primary particles agglutinate with one another to form secondary particles.

7 (new): A low-density neutral paper according to Claim 2, characterized in that the average particle size of the precipitated calcium carbonate-silica composite is 30 μ m or less.

8 (new): A low-density neutral paper according to Claim 3, characterized in that the average particle size of the precipitated calcium carbonate-silica composite is 30 μ m or less.

9 (new): A low-density neutral paper according to Claim 4, characterized in that the average particle size of the precipitated calcium carbonate-silica composite is 30 μm or less.

10 (new): A low-density neutral paper according to Claim 2, characterized in that the precipitated calcium carbonate particles used to produce the precipitated calcium carbonate-silica composite are constituted by rosette-calcite precipitated calcium carbonate where spindle-shaped primary particles agglutinate with one another to form secondary particles.

11 (new): A low-density neutral paper according to Claim 3, characterized in that the precipitated calcium carbonate particles used to produce the precipitated calcium carbonate-silica composite are constituted by rosette-calcite precipitated calcium carbonate where spindle-shaped primary particles agglutinate with one another to form secondary particles.

12 (new): A low-density neutral paper according to Claim 4, characterized in that the precipitated calcium carbonate particles used to produce the precipitated calcium carbonate-silica composite are constituted by rosette-calcite precipitated calcium carbonate where spindle-shaped primary particles agglutinate with one another to form secondary particles.

13 (new): A low-density neutral paper according to Claim 5, characterized in that the precipitated calcium carbonate particles used to produce the precipitated calcium carbonate-silica composite are constituted by rosette-calcite precipitated calcium carbonate where spindle-shaped primary particles agglutinate with one another to form secondary particles.

14 (new): A low-density neutral paper which is a printing paper, neutral newsprinting paper, or electrophotographic transfer paper, comprising:

pulp; and

a filler comprising a composite of precipitated calcium carbonate-silica wherein precipitated calcium carbonate particles are coated with precipitated silicic acid component, in an amount of 1 to 25 solid content percent by weight of the paper if the paper is a printing paper or electrophotographic transfer paper or in an amount of 0.1 to 25 solid content percent by weight to the paper if the paper is a neutral newsprinting paper,

wherein a ratio of precipitated calcium carbonate to silica (precipitated calcium carbonate/silica) in the composite of precipitated calcium carbonate-silica is 30/70 to 70/30 in solid content by weight.

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15 (new): The low-density neutral paper according to Claim 14, wherein the composite of precipitated calcium carbonate-silica has an average particle size of 30 μm or less.

16 (new): The low-density neutral paper according to Claim 14, wherein the precipitated calcium carbonate particles are constituted by rosette-calcite precipitated calcium carbonate where spindle-shaped primary particles agglutinate with one another to form secondary particles.